

**Peter D. Ashlock**  
**1929–1989**

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The career of one of America's notable hemipterists, Peter D. Ashlock, closed on 26 January 1989 when he died of heart failure after several years of declining health. He was a professor of Entomology at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, a curator in the Snow Entomological Museum, and a part-time appointee to the Department of Systematics and Ecology. He was a recognized authority on Lygaeidae, or seed bugs, and was a seminal contributor to biological systematics, with 50 published works and several more in press at the time of his death. He often disagreed with both numerical pheneticists and cladists, adhering most closely to the philosophy of evolutionary systematics of Ernst Mayr, and had just completed a chapter for a revision of Mayr's 1969 "Principles of Systematic Zoology."

Pete (as he was known to friends and colleagues) was born on 22 August 1929 in San Francisco, and became interested in insects as a boy. He received his B.S. in Entomology from the University of California (Berkeley) in 1952, then served two years in the army as an ecological entomologist at the Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah, followed by studies with Prof. James A. Slater at the University of Connecticut where he earned his M.S. degree. While at Storrs he met Virginia ("Jinny") Harris and they were married at Greensboro, North Carolina in June 1956. Pete entered a doctoral program at Berkeley that fall, but interrupted those studies to work for two years (1958–1960) with the Entomology Research Division (USDA) at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. There he did routine identifications and developed the Hemiptera collections, but also took course work at the University of Maryland. In 1960 he returned to Berkeley to study with Prof. R. L. Usinger for three more years. Bob and Pete became close friends, and together they sailed on the *Golden Bear* to participate for three months in the 1964 Galápagos International Scientific Project to the Galápagos, Ecuador and Cocos Island.

From 1964 to 1966 Pete was curator of Hemiptera at the Bernice P. Bishop Museum in Honolulu. While there he collected on all major Hawaiian Islands and travelled to Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and Japan. In 1966 he was awarded the Ph.D. degree from the University of California. When Prof. Slater took a sabbatical leave from the University of Connecticut for the 1967–1968 academic year, Pete took leave from the Bishop Museum to replace him, teaching entomology and systematics. In 1968 the Ashlocks made their last move, to the University of Kansas. He attained full professor rank in 1981, and held a half-time appointment as curator in the Snow Entomological Museum. He had planned to retire in May 1989 to Tomales Bay, California to continue his studies on Lygaeidae.

In addition to his membership in the Pacific Coast Entomological Society, he was a member of the Entomological Society of America, Society of Systematic Zoology, Entomological Society of Washington, the Kansas Entomological Society, the American Society of Plant Taxonomists, and Sigma Xi, as well as a research associate of the Bishop Museum. On the more whimsical side, he was an enthusiastic member of the International Wizard of Oz Club.

Although not an avid field worker, Pete went abroad several times and was particularly fond of recalling adventures from his NSF supported expedition to Tahiti and the Marquesas where he travelled in part by sailboat, searching for lygaeids that he hoped would help explain Pacific Basin biogeography. He continually searched for new ways to unlock biogeographical and systematic puzzles, and his excitement was evident when he made a significant new discovery.

He was a quiet man who shunned most social activities, informal in dress and manner, and given to a degree of professorial disorder and forgetfulness. He was a scientist of integrity, patient with his graduate students and proud of their accomplishments. Pete was a kind and gentle person with many lasting friendships, and was a devoted husband and father. He is survived by his wife, two sons, Daniel and Joseph, and a granddaughter. A memorial service was held on 1 February at the University of Kansas.